GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE
LOK SABHA

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:399
ANSWERED ON:26.07.2006
HAZARDOUS CONTENTS IN COLD DRINKS
Ahir Shri Hansraj Gangaram

Will the Minister of HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the report of the Sharad Pawar Joint Parliamentary Committee which examined the hazardous contents in cold drinks has been made public by the Government;

(b) if so, the details of the report;

(c) if not, the reasons therefore;

(d) whether the Government proposes to ban cold drinks in view of the detection of hazardous contents in them; and

(e) if so, the steps taken by the Government in this regard?

Answer

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HEALTH & FAMILY WELFARE (SMT. PANABAKA LAKSHMI)

(a) & (b : Yes, Sir. The said report was laid down in the Parliament on 4th February, 2004. The salient recommendations of the report in so far as hazardous contents in cold drinks are concerned, are enclosed at Annexure-I.

(c): Does not arise.

(d)&(e) : In line with the recommendations, the standards for carbonated water under the PFA Rules, 1955 has since been amended vide GSR 451 (E) dated 15.07.2004 whereby it has been provided that water used in the manufacture of carbonated water shall conform to the standards of packaged drinking water as prescribed under PFA Rules 1955, wherein the prescribed maximum limits of pesticide residues are as under:-

(i) Pesticide Residues considered individually Not more than0.0001mg/ltr.

(ii) Total Pesticide Residues Not more than 0.0005mg/ltr.

A National Level Expert Committee has been constituted by the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare to review the standards for soft drink, taking into consideration the possibility of maximum residue limits in various components of the soft drinks, in the light of JPC report.

ANNEX-I

RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE JOINT COMMITTEE ON PESTICIDE RESIDUES IN AND SAFETY STANDARDS FOR SOFT DRINKS, FRUIT JUICE AND OTHER BEVERAGES

1. The Committee finds that the CSE findings are correct on the presence of pesticide residues in carbonated water strictly in respect of the 36 samples of 12 brand names analyzed by them.

2. The Committee are therefore of the considered opinion that the water used in manufacturing the soft drinking should be in conformity with the new norms which have already been notified under notification number G.S.R. 554 (E) dated 18.07.2003 so that the consumers are not deprived of the best standards.

3. The Committee recommend that the standards for carbonated beverages which are best suited for the Indian conditions need to be fixed in the overall perspective of public health. These standards should also be stringent enough. The reason that the other countries have not fixed such limit, should not dissuade our law makers in attempting to do so, particularly when a vulnerable section of our population who are young and constitute a vast national asset are consuming the soft drinks. In Committee's view therefore, it is prudent to seek complete freedom from pesticide residues in sweetened aerated waters. "Unsafe even if trace" should be the eventual goal.

4. Given the current levels of pesticide residues allowed in raw foods and vegetables, and given the socio-economic ground realities, the fruit juices and beverage industry needs to be treated differently compared to the carbonated sectors. The same standards can

not applied to the equally. Pesticide residues in food are a phenomena related to agriculture practices as they enter the soil and plants systems and work their way into the food chain. It is not a manufacture related issue and , therefore, it will not be fair or proper to apply the carbonated water and packaged drinking water (Pesticide) residue levels to the fruit and vegetable juices and such beverages.

5. The Committee also recommends that institution like ICMR, National Institute of Nutrition, CFTRI etc. should evolve database taking into account our food habits with regard to consumption of processed and non-processed food. Level of contaminants, and pesticides in these food products, their conformity with acceptable daily intake, usage of pesticide in agriculture and public health programme and based on their database, standards for fruit juice and other beverages may be fixed after due deliberations in CCFS.

6. The committee recommends that section 2
(v) of the PFA Act which defines "food" should be amended to include drinking water.

7. The Committee recommends a mandatory food recall system should be established and companies should be made accountable for selling sub-standard and harmful products in the market which must be destroyed in the presence of authorities.